



Refresh Your Life

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2009

Refreshing Our Lives

an ongoing series of programs

Reducing Stress

by Trudy Toll

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Hayward Public Library*

Stress will always be a part of any society moving as fast as ours does. Learning to cope with it so it does us little harm is a skill to seek, practice and improve. Stress can come from many sources.

There are many factors in our day that press down against us; it might be long hours of a commute that is harrowing, frustrating and expensive. It might be a job where we are run ragged, unappreciated and underpaid. It might be a relationship that feels cruel, demoralizing and scary. Whatever the problem causing the stress is, we can change our position to that difficult situation.

One of the first things to recognize about stress is that we can take charge of how we handle it. We can start to change the changeable and do our best to avoid the unchangeable.

When we think about stresses in our lives we can start by looking at ourselves. Sometimes we are the sources of our own stress. A holiday celebration worthy of Martha Stewart is a huge production. Is it worth the stress of getting everything just right



and feeling bad when it doesn't measure up to a level of perfection that takes the real Martha Stewart teams of assistants, chefs, special retailers and production assistants weeks to assemble for the camera? Remember it is the friends and not the presentation which make the occasion fun. Don't lose sight of what is really important.

Remember another diva of the kitchen, Julia Child. When a turkey fell on the floor in front of a TV audience of thousands, she picked it up, laughing about it, knowing it didn't alter her ability to enjoy the dinner with her friends.

Sometimes we feel stressed when we find that we have over-extended ourselves. Think of creative ways to, "just say no." Elizabeth Scott, M.S., from About.com suggests: "Just say, 'I'm sorry. I can't do this right now' or 'let me think about it and get back to you' or 'I can't do this, but I can do...' and suggest something less stressful that still helps the

UPCOMING REFRESH YOUR LIFE EVENTS:

Stress Reduction

Sat., March 7 @ 11:00 am

Cathy Inouye will discuss how exercise can help reduce stress and its impact on our bodies and on our lives.

High Blood Pressure

Sat., April 4 @ 11:00 am

Cathy Inouye will talk about how exercise can positively impact high blood pressure.

Cardiovascular Health

Sat., May 30, @ 11:00 am

Sue Rodearmel will speak on how to keep your heart happy through exercise.

Flexibility

Sat., June 13 @ 11:00 am

Frances Sedayao will speak on how important flexibility is and how we can become more flexible with exercise.

friend asking the favor.

If there is a task that always seems to get your goat, think of a way to no longer have to do that particular task. Delegate that job, have someone else do it.

Of course we can't avoid all stress. When you feel stress, find a constructive way to express it—write it down, start a journal, write, (but don't mail) a letter. Try to process it and let it go. You can write in a journal releasing the stress and at the same time keeping a record to which you can refer.

Hobbies can be a great inexpensive stress buster. For example, you can smash clay and then shape it into



Hoboken : John Wiley & Sons, c2005.



Refreshing My Life

(continued from Page 1)

beautiful and useful objects therefore releasing the stress and creatively refilling yourself in the process.

Attend a program at the library, or a class at the Adult School. Learn a new skill, read and join a book group. The library also has movies. You can join or create a movie group just like a book group. Cookbooks and diet books can guide you towards a healthier lifestyle. You can get gardening books to aid you in growing something positive in your own back yard, or on your balcony, or in your kitchen window. You can find books at the library on just about anything you chose to pursue to relieve stress.

If a job is repeatedly causing you pain, perhaps it is time to find a different job. F. John Reh, of About.com, suggests these steps to help reduce stress at work:

1. *Improve your time management and organization skills.*
2. *Relax and breathe deeply.*
3. *Take more breaks.*
4. *Lighten up.*
5. *Learn to listen better.*
6. *Fix your environment.*
7. *Don't sweat the small stuff.*
8. *Get more sleep.*
9. *Find a mentor.*
10. *Spend more time with optimistic people.*

Stress is sometimes touted as a motivator, a strengthening element. You alone can decide if your situation is motivating you to do better work or whether you are being badly injured psychically and emotionally, and should remove yourself from the situation.

Web Links for Stress Management Strategies

What Are Some Specific Stress Reduction Methods?

(http://www.umm.edu/patiented/articles/what_some_specific_stress_reduction_methods_000031_7.htm) Simple stress reduction suggestions, including diet, exercise, and cognitive-behavioral techniques. (University of Maryland Medical Center)

Exercise Fuels the Brain's Stress Buffers

(<http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=25>) Explains how regular exercise helps reduce and manage stress levels. (American Psychological Association)

Stress Management: How Do You React During Stressful Situations?

(<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-management/SR00032>) Evaluate the way you react to stress and learn how to transform your negative responses. (Mayo Clinic)

Stress Management for Parents

(<http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/stress.shtml>) Stress management suggestions for stressed-out parents, including 52 proven stress reducers. (Child Development Institute)

Assert Yourself

(http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=51) Self-help modules designed to help you reduce stress, depression, and anxiety by improving your assertiveness. (Centre for Clinical Interventions)

Put Off Procrastinating

(http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=50) Work your way through a self-help series on how to stop procrastination problems. (Centre for Clinical Interventions)

The Road to Resilience (PDF)

(http://www.apahelpcenter.org/dl/the_road_to_resilience.pdf) Learn how to increase your resilience, the trait that allows you to bounce back from adversity and stress. (American Psychological Association)

People often pick strategies for coping with the harmful side effects of stress by drinking, watching TV, gambling, or sleeping. What you can see when you're not stressed out is that while those activities may help you relax in the short term, in the long run they don't change the stressors or you.

Take control of your behavior and do positive things for yourself. See if you can change the situation. Change your attitude towards the situations that you can not change. Act positively. Walk for your health, eat healthy food, avoid people and situa-

tions that will be negative.

Acknowledge the stress and then get started fighting it, lessening it and winning - *Refreshing your Life* in the process.

Trudy Toll

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**Laughter Yoga
Monthly
at the
Main Library**

**Saturdays 3-5pm
Mar. 7
Apr. 4**





SAVE THE DATE !



Movie critic Jan Wahl is coming to the Hayward Public Library!

She will be here from noon until 2:00pm on Saturday June 20, 2009.

Ms. Wahl will show movie clips & entertain us with her commentary. This program is free, and the public is welcome.

Call (510) 881-7974 for more information.

Autobiography - Memoir Discussion Group

Hayward Main Library—Upstairs meeting room.

6:30PM - third Wednesday of the month

Mar. 18: *Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah

"Mostly Literary" Fiction Discussion Group

Hayward Main Library

6:30PM - second Monday of the month

Mar. 9: *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines

Globetrotters Book Club - NEW

Weekes Branch Library—Pappas Legacy Room

6:30PM - last Tuesday of the month

Mar. 31: *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines



Join the Big Read-A-Thon

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines

Eon Coffee House, 24970 Hesperian—

Thurs., Mar. 5, noon-9:00 PM

Meet Oprah Book Club favorite Lalita Tademy

Main Library—Wed., Mar. 11, 6:00 PM

The Big Read Keynote Event—Ernest Gaines

Author of *A Lesson Before Dying*

CSU East Bay, Bldg VBT, RM 124—Sat., Mar. 31, 1:00 PM

HAYWARD PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Main Library

835 C Street

Hayward, CA 94541

Weekes Branch Library

27300 Patrick Avenue

Hayward, CA 94544

Visit us on the Web @

www.library.hayward-ca.gov

AND

Check out our electronic newsletter @

<http://tinyurl.com/541xj8com>

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